Entrance

Governor designate must remain hidden in the ship until the atmosphere ashore was more agreeable for military exercises. 000

Goode and the A.D.C. and I lunched together in the deserted saloon, all the passengers who, unlike myself, were free agents, having gone ashore despite the heat. After lunch Goode and the A.D.C. returned to the shore, and left to myself, I went to my cabin and sat under a fan and chatted to my Arab servant, Salem, who was busily engaged in laying out for the first time my white ceremonial uniform with its almost indecently bright and new gold epaulettes. We talked of the town and the Protectorate and the shooting prospects for the coming winter season, and a host of other unimportant matters. We had known each other for twenty years, and between us there was a degree of understanding and mutual respect, which made our relationship closer than that of just master and servant; we were friends. One of the great charms of the Arabs of tribal status from the Protectorate is that when they enter service with understanding people they are never familiar and never presume. Salem and I, when on tour in the Protectorate, have on more than one occasion sat, together with the local Ruler, on the floor and eaten with our hands from the same dish, and then, twenty-four hours later, thanks to air transport, Salem, dressed in immaculate white uniform with a red fez on his head, has superintended the service of refreshments at an official function over which I have presided at Government House. Sometimes when strangers have obviously been much impressed by his correct and formal demeanour, I have had an almost irresistible desire to laugh and tell them what he and I were doing so short a time before; but I have restrained myself. It would not have done, so very few would have understood—more is the pity. [184] • [609] •

The hot afternoon passed pleasantly enough and all too soon it was time for me to put on my cool-looking, but in reality, very hot uniform and don my regulation white helmet surmounted by its plume of red and white feathers; all very glorious, but remarkably uncomfortable. As soon as I was dressed I went out on deck and found the A.D.C., a retired Commander of the Royal Navy, ready and waiting and the launch alongside.

Aden

We arrived unhurriedly on the small landing ground at Mukeiras; the Fairey 2 F.s never hurried, but they generally got to their destination, which was just as well because they were single-engined aircraft and the Protectorate has an unduly large proportion of sharp rocky hills to nice flat open spaces suitable for a forced landing.

[291] We were met on arrival by a seething mass of blue-kilted tribesmen led by the young Sultan, Saleh bin Hussein[1] bin Jabil, and the Regent, Sultan Mohd bin Jabil, and the Sultan's father, Hussein bin Jabil. It was my first meeting with the Sultan who was later to become my personal friend and one of the staunchest and most loyal of the Rulers of the Protectorate. At that time he was just a nice-looking lad and I was more interested in the Regent, a hook-nosed middle-aged man, crafty and, I was to learn later, unreliable, and also in the Sultan's father Hussein, a fine figure of a man with an open frank countenance and a charming smile, which his son has inherited. Hussein was killed some years later not far from Mukeiras in a tribal dust-up with the Rassasis, a tribe which lies to the Yemen side of the *status quo* frontier. His death was a loss to his people, to his son and to us.

[184] [574] As we walked forward towards the village surrounded by and followed by a crowd of tribesmen, some cattle and goats were led out and slaughtered in front of us, a disgusting business, but required by tradition on such great occasions. Incidentally, they provided the basis of the meal we would eat later. Quite often in the future I tried to stop the barbarous custom, and sometimes I was successful, much to the disappointment of the poorer elements who invariably benefit by being given the remnants of the feast.

On arrival at the village we were led into a small house to await the final preparation of lunch; while we were waiting for the meal a diversion was caused by a stout gentleman with a fine black beard walking into the room. He gave a general greeting to the company there assembled and his arrival appeared to cause some surprise to many of those present, although I am certain that the Regent was well aware of his

[1] Sultan Saleh bin Hussein, C.M.G., C.B.E.

2: Hickinbotham G-4, 5 (ca. 1931-ca. 1957)
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648 their territory to any foreign power without the previous permission of the Government of India. In return we undertook to protect them from external aggression. Those were the main clauses, but there were, of course, subsidiary clauses which differed from Treaty to Treaty and which related to freedom of access to each other's territory, the protection of trade routes and similar matters. The main object of the Treaties was protection, protection from the Yemen as far as the tribes were concerned, and protection from the Yemen and the tribes themselves as far as we were concerned.

As the years went by and the buffer grew in size as more and more States came into alliance, so did our responsibilities to the people of the area grow, although it took us nearly a hundred years to realise our obligations, which we have not yet adequately discharged.

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631 The States are twenty-five in number, of which the Sultanate of Lahej is the senior, not only by virtue of its importance, but also because it was the first to enter into treaty relations with Her Majesty's Government. They vary greatly in size from the 40,000 square miles of the Quaiti Sultanate of Shihr and Mukalla, to the few unproductive acres of the Sultan of Bir Ali, an insignificant little sea port. The Rulers, who are either Sultans or Sheikhs or Amirs, or even Naqibs—it makes no difference to the importance of the State what title is held by the Ruler—are all independent in so far as their internal authority is concerned, and the only curbs on their power are tradition and the degree of independence of the people themselves. This latter varies with the geographical position and the nature of the terrain of the State. In the Yafa Highlands, which are almost inaccessible, every tribesman is a law unto himself and pays little heed to the titular leader, the Upper Yafa Sultan, unless the land is in grave danger when they rally to him until the danger is passed. In the Lowlands and in the Southern plain where the States are more vulnerable, there is a greater degree of obedience by the tribesmen to the authority of their Ruler, and such is the case where tribal territory abuts on to the Yemen in open country; country where the fear of Zeidi raids is greatest.

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First Acquaintance with the Protectorate

The people are, as I was quick to realise after I had seen and spoken to the tribesman at the Khormaksar races, independent and virile, and later I was to find that they did not lack a sense of humour. In the Highlands they dress, even to this day, in blue cotton kilts which reach to the knee, leaving the upper part of the body bare, except for the vegetable oil and blue dye with which they rub their skin as a protection against the sun in summer and the cold in winter. The kilt is held in place by a leather cartridge belt which in turn supports a dagger, generally with a silver scabbard. A rifle and a pair of leather sandals complete the picture, except in the Colony where rifles and daggers, except for the privileged few, have to be surrendered to authority on entrance, and may not be carried on the person. In the Colony, too, and indeed in the more developed areas of the Protectorate, the blue kilt has given place to brightly coloured kilts made from silk and cotton cloth imported from Indonesia and India, and the blue dye and oil have been replaced by shirts and coats, and indeed, by collars and ties and trousers when the owners have come to this country either on business or for pleasure.

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2: Hickinbotham G-[illegible], 5 (ca. 1931-ca. 1957)
1958 MM1 Aden MM1

outside the town, and as darkness fell the guns of the fort ceased to boom their still unfinished salute.

The next day the Political Officer took me to see the place where Seager had been attacked as he, all unsuspecting, walked with his wife, a brave lady who did her best to beat off her husband's assailants until the Government Guard escort could come up. They had been told by Seager to follow some little distance behind so that he and his wife could enjoy their stroll in private. There I found a small heap of stones marking the spot and I had them scattered because there was no point in perpetuating the memory of a shameful incident. Seager had, I am glad to say, recovered, and the would-be assassins had been punished, that is, those who had not fled to the security of the Yemen. As far as I was concerned the chapter was closed.

There was time to spare before we were due to lunch with the Naib, so I formed my escort into a line of beaters and for an hour or so we wandered over the slopes of the nearby hills and found some hares among the scrub. Then back across the plateau to Dhala and up to the castle where I had first stayed twenty years before.

The Naib met us at the entrance and after I had inspected the Guard of Tribal Guards I was ushered into a long narrow room where some of the guests had already assembled. We shook hands and took our seats on the floor around the walls. I was seated at one end on the right of the Naib and on his left was the Political Officer, and as more and more guests entered they gave the customary salutation and we rose and I shook hands with them and they took their places round the walls. The guests were a curious collection, most of those present being tribal leaders and notables from the area, but there were others from neighbouring districts and, of course, the soldiers of my escort and my own personal servants. The people of Dhala have one serious vice and that is that they grow and eat Qât, which absorbs a great deal of their vitality and practically all their money; in consequence, they are physically well below the ordinary standard of the Protectorate, and in appearance I think they are best described by the American adjective "mean". Personally, I have always liked the country better

2: Hickinbotham G-4, 5 (ca. 1931-ca. 1957)
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643 course, exceptions and in Lahej, for example, the electoral college is composed not only of the heads of the branches of the Ruling family, but also of the Sheikhs of the principal tribes and the senior Qadhi, but generally speaking it is the family who make the choice for tribal approval.

In Dhala on this occasion the new Amir was selected after a bitter disagreement between two of his uncles, and an attempt on the part of the family council to avoid having to make a decision by asking for direct British administration. The troublesome uncle, having failed to ensure that a large proportion of the State revenue would in future be devoted solely to the support of himself and his family, abstained from voting in the council meeting and fled that same night to the Yemen with his close relations, and was warmly welcomed there. The new Amir was very upset at what he considered to be a serious affront to his dignity, but, personally, I had no doubt that he was well rid of a particularly useless and disagreeable bunch of Qāt-ridden wasters.

AULAKIS

636 In the winter of 1951–52, the Aulaki adventure was making
131 good progress. The Aulakis are a virile and warlike clan whose
184 territory runs north and south along the western side of the administrative dividing line between the western and eastern sections of the Protectorate and are themselves divided into three States, the Lower Aulaki Sultanate in the south on the sea coast, then the Sheikhdom, an area of fierce barren hills with steep and narrow valleys, and in the north the more open table-lands of the Upper Aulaki Sultanate.

636 At this point a word of explanation is necessary about the administrative dividing line to which I have referred. This line came into being purely as an administrative convenience and should, in fact, never have been incorporated on the maps of the area because the Aden Protectorate is one indivisible whole. The reason why any administrative line became necessary was that at the period of history when it was first drawn in pencil on an old map, probably by the Governor, the British

2: Hickinbotham G-4, 5 (ca. 1931-ca. 1957)
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Agent in the west of the Protectorate was a person of very determined character who reacted strongly to any encroachment of what he considered to be his kingdom, while the distinguished administrator at that time in the Hadhramaut was equally strong minded and had acquisitive tendencies; so in order to prevent a major war between these two distinguished officers a line had to be drawn, and they had to be instructed to keep inside their boundaries.

Many years ago the Aulaki had burst out of their hilly fastnesses and spread east and west through the length and breadth of the Protectorate, until their influence ran right up to the Yemen borders and they held even Lahej to ransom, while away in the east the Quaiti Sultanate suffered from their depredations. In the earliest days of South-west Arabia before the Christian era, it is probable that the Aulakis were the most powerful race that that country had ever produced, but like many other great nations they gradually declined in influence and authority until today they have little but their barren hills and their pride, the latter bolstered up by nebulous claims to tribute from their neighbours, which they can no longer enforce. Their pride was their greatest asset and at the same time their worst enemy: in their powerful and prosperous days it had driven them forward and in the days of their weakness it had torn them apart until the great Aulaki Confederation had dissolved into a maze of blood feuds which had laid waste the land upon which they had come to depend, and thereby impoverished the people.

The old Sheikh who ruled the Sheikhdom had come into treaty relation with us in 1904 and he was still alive, but he was too old to manage the affairs of his country, and his youngest son Abdullah had been chosen as Regent to rule in his name. Abdullah was a pleasant person with none of the strong characteristics of his brothers and he had been selected by the family council and the tribal leaders for that very reason. His eldest brother was too die-hard to be acceptable to the family or the tribes; the bedouin brother was not interested, and his stout brother preferred to be the power behind the throne rather than the occupant of the throne itself. The

2: Hickinbotham G-4, 5 (ca. 1931-ca. 1957)
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491 others following the old, but all opening up the country and making possible better security and greater trade.

794 At Yeshbum I stayed the night with a family of influential
• 184 Saiyids. They were very pleasant people indeed on the surface,
[178] though the opening up of the country must have been disagreeable to all but the broad-minded among them, and Saiyids like other religious leaders, are not renowned for their broadness of mind. Inviolate as Saiyids, descendants of the Prophet Muhammed, shrewd business men who lend money against property mortgages, educated among an ignorant people, and by tradition the mediators in family and tribal disputes, they were powerful people whose influence was bound to be affected adversely as contact with the outer world increased and education became effective. My host of the evening was Sheikh Ali Jifri, a charming elderly gentleman much afflicted with rheumatism, who was far-sighted enough to recognise the inevitable and to accept a change which he knew to be in the interests of the Aulaki people. Unfortunately, he died not long after my visit and his kindly influence was removed from his brother and his sons and nephews. They have always been difficult and resentful and have never really co-operated in the setting up of the Aulaki administration and have not used their
[185] influence in the right direction in the Council Chamber. Political interests in the neighbourhood of Aden and in the Colony itself and the acquisition of agricultural land in the rich cotton areas, have been their pursuits. Nasser of Egypt is their idol and independence is their goal. What a pity learned students of religion cannot be content with the greatest of all occupations, the bringing of the word of God to the people of this tortured earth. The truth is that the false gods of wealth and power attract descendants of the Prophet in the same way as other people, for after all, they are but human.

184 The following day we drove up the Wadi Yeshbum to Said,
- the capital of the State beneath whose ancient towers I was to
[541] be greeted by the Amir, his brothers and the tribal leaders. They were all ready for us where the Wadi broadens just below the town and they formed a procession, firing their rifles in the traditional manner, while their poets composed

2: Hickinbotham G-4, 5 (ca. 1931-ca. 1957)
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topical calypsos or, to use their own word, *zamils*, rhyming [541]
lines with a topical theme, part repeated by the chorus of [538]
tribesmen. It was the first time I had seen one of these tribal demonstrations, and I was thrilled as the blue kilted tribesmen, led by their Amir, moved in what seemed to be a tail-less snake of men, three abreast, round and round, coiling and uncoiling while rifles were being fired in the air with a delightful disregard for the eventual destination of their contents among the surrounding hills.

The procession over, I walked up the Wadi with the Amir ooo
on one side and his eldest brother on the other, and as we passed a very modern-looking gun it commenced to fire my salute. It was some ten feet above us on the bank, and I inquired from where they had obtained the blank ammunition for the gun, for this was no black powder affair, and was not altogether surprised to learn that live ammunition was being used. I should like to have hastened my footsteps and got well clear before the next round, but that would have been very poorly thought of, so we continued our stately walk without haste or damage to anything, except our ear-drums.

The new administration made a good start, but that salute of 628
guns had been heard in the Yemen, although nearly two years 648
were to pass before the re-opening of an old family dispute 636
split the ruling family and gave the Imam his opportunity. The Yemen took sides with money and gifts of rifles and ammunition, and once again shots whistled along the narrow streets of Said, and as the infection spread and the tribesmen became restive, Abdullah, the Amir, faced serious trouble. By the grace of God and the opportune visit to the Protectorate of the then Minister of State, Mr. Hopkinson, now Lord Colyton, the additional financial help we needed so badly was made available to the young and struggling administration. Much can be done with money in Arabia, even to the extent of starting and stopping wars, as Lawrence demonstrated in the Hedjaz.

A young Assistant Adviser came to the Aulakis at the same 636
time (the designation "Political Officer" had been abolished, and "Assistant Adviser" introduced as being more truly

new displacing the old is an inevitable process and provided it is done at a reasonable pace need not be disturbing and is often imperceptible. It is the speed of change which matters, and that is what caused the trouble in the Protectorate. In England the change from horse-drawn transport to motor transport took twenty years or more and there was ample time for readjustment. In Aden it took as many days from the time a new major road was open to motor traffic, and the unemployed camel men sat nursing their rifles and wondering how to prevent their animals and themselves from starving. It was not long before they noticed the weapon in their hands and commenced to use it to drive the lorries off the roads. The State and Political Authorities intervened before too much damage was done and negotiations resulted in agreements which restricted the use of lorries to named kinds of merchandise, and so time was gained for readjustment.

The Eastern Aden Protectorate was more affected than the Western by road development and on more than one occasion troops had to be used to persuade the camel men and their friends to be sensible and not to interfere with the lorry traffic which might have had very serious consequences. The Wadi Hadhramaut, that vast cut through the limestone plateau of the Jöl filled with palm groves and white-walled towns, peopled by the most astute and the hardest business men in the world, was subject to droughts which twice in living memory had led to famine: the reason for this had been that the whole irrigation system depended on the availability of bullocks to draw water from the shallow wells and when, during the droughts, the corn crops had failed, the animals had either to be fed on seed grain or be left to die of starvation; in the former case it meant that when the rains did come, there was no seed to sow, in the latter that there were no animals to draw water. The solution was to eliminate the dependence on bullocks and make available to farmers and date garden owners small diesel pumps with which to irrigate their land. They paid cash for the pumps if they could, or if they couldn't they put down a deposit and paid the balance in monthly instalments. A maintenance service, based on a central workshop, which had been set